

dvd18

MEN'S TEIOH (or however the hell you spell it)! Tiger Mask IV! Chris Jericho! ULTIMO DRAGON! SHOICHI FUNAKI! TAKA MICHINOKU! and other post-youngster things I saw! Howdy!

Welcome to DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #18! The youngster has arrived, the duel-grandma-mafia kicks are over (they're old school:), the lil gal is asleep as is the wife, so I can finally do another one of these without having to run over gaze in wonderment as the lil one yawns. I await the Michinoku Pro "These Days" COMM TAPE post by the exalted Dark Cheetah and pray to the cais. hellish overlords that they release it to the wrestling starved RSPW masses.:)

-BIG NEWS! I saw an entire BattlArts Champ Forum that I liked (August something-1996)! (Thanks Rob! Post already!) The highlight for me was watching TAKA Michinoku and Shoichi Funaki tag against those... two ... other... guys (MUST... FIND... MATCHLIST... TO... STEAL... Ollie?) TAKA is becoming a mutant version of Shinjiro Ohtani- in that Ohtani looks REAL at home trading kicks and submission holds with the UWFi punks and TAKA looked REAL at home staying on the mat with the BattlArts young punks. The main difference is that UWFi is fifty times stiffer than BattleArts and four times as good. Regardless of the difference of quality of the shoot promotions, the application of TAKA's speed and quickness from a highflying style to shootstyle is very impressive. He wrestles a smart pseudo-shoot style relying more on being quicker than his opponent and countering his holds, than on kicking his opponent (which actually is the BattlArts variation on the shootstyle phenomenon- a sort of Fujiwara-esque philosophy mixed with way too much pro style crud to make it overly effective.) The major edge that TAKA has over his vastly talented New Japan young superstar compatriot is that TAKA can work a Lucha match as well as anyone in Mexico, and I haven't seen our boy Shinjiro work one past the mutated Mexican-Japanese style of the Negro Casas match from the J-Crown. Thus, I EAGERLY await the first TAKA/Misterio match, but would merely "freak out and party" (tm Alex Wright) at the idea of a Ohtani/Misterio match. Funaki is much more at home in these matches than in the Michinoku Pro deals he ends up in and is a good powerman to TAKA's spectacularness and they worked a combination Northern Lights

Suplex-into-a-springboard-kneedrop just to add to the

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/Michinoku Pro "we-make-shootstyle-fun" motif that is running wild in Michinoku these days. The other two matches were basically shoot-style matches with pro style psychology (been watching Hotta matches, I see) and worked very well from both sides of these coins. Diasuke Ikeda vs (I guess) Carl Greco was first rate- with a lot more stiffness and less pro style tangents. The key to me for these things is if I spend less time concentrating on how much they are selling and more on it looking (if not being) so stiff that any selling looks natural (which is how pro style should be also, in my book). Ikeda has finally won me over- after these matches (he was in a tag match earlier in the show) and the whip ass Ooya match (HESHAM... HESHAM... HESHAM... WORSHIP AT THE FEET OF HISAKATSU OOYA...:)) I'll start watching these BattlArts things, despite the hilariously bad matches that accompany the good. Hell, that's my rationale for watching WCW...

- I watched the Champs Forum with the fab 8-man tag of Denny Collins, Dick Togo, Shoichi Funaki and Shiryu as they squared off against Super Astro, Super Delphin, El Gran Hamada,

and Alexander Otsuka and the tres cool TigerMaskIV vs Men's Teioh match, and it all was steeped in greatness. The 8-man tag is the kind of thing that makes Michinoku Pro great: Eight wrestlers, four different styles united by workrate, style and execution- what a fantabulous melting pot of wrestling! The pinnacle of this was Dick Togo finally going face-to-face with his Mexican wrestling-style inspiration- Super Astro. My guess is that they had to have this match to prove that Dick Togo and Super Astro were two different fellas.:) Super Astro had the coolest mask I've ever seen him in (gold lame with silver and white embroidery) and ruled the goddang world like he is wont to do, being one of my fave old school Luchadores with SilverKing. I really hope Michinoku Pro becomes the home away from home for all these Mexican greats because to see him in with all these guys that stole all of his moves is a real joy to see. Plus if the Mil Mascaras, Dos Caras, and Super Astro matches I've seen this week are any indication, they go out and spring for new masks for their idols and they were never more of the Lucha fashion plates until they hit MP. The Tiger Mask IV vs Men's Teioh match was pretty choice as it finally dawned on me what they are trying to do with the former Terry Boy. He is going to the living embodiment of American Pro Style wrestling- even down to the Flair Woo before the figure four leglock. I'm guessing the whole Something DX is about some kind of North American invasion of styles or something. If Shiryu starts wearing masks that have Toronto Mapleleafs insignia on them and starts badmouthng Lucha Libre then my theory will be correct.:) I hope this is the case, because only MP would embrace ALL styles like it does and organize them against each other in such an entertaining way. I would expect a stable of Anglophile wrestlers with Tigermask IV and the Great Sasuke being at the forefront, because one can really tell that Sasuke has a deep fascination with the history of British mat wrestling. Tiger Mask IV, though nowhere near as good as any of the other three, would fit that mold quite nicely.

_I saw a bunch of IWA (Winnipeg) and I can't quite figure out the year it was braodcast originally. My guess would be early 95. It had a lot of choice wrestling- my fave being the Natural who I guess is the Great Lost Canadian Heat Machine. He was also a great announcer, explaining a Stretch Plum in detail as Chris Jericho applied it. The highlight was a Ultimo Dragaon/Chris Jericho match that took place at some theatre in Manitoba I would guess. It was a freaky match because they couldn't do anything outside the ring because it was on a stage, so they decided to make it rule in the ring. Jericho did all these cool Mexican abdominal stretch variations that I'm quite the sucker for and UD and Jericho did the whole headscissor sequences that made their WAR Super Junior tourney deal such a success. Other wrestlers that seemed pretty good were Iceman Eric Freeze and Diamond Timothy Flowers, but there was quite a bit of the Great Gama and Champagne Gerry Morrow.

-I saw a WAR Commercial tape (did I tell you how much Rob rules the fucking world?) that had a Misterio/Psicosis match that was definitely the last of the series. This was definitely running on vapors because it didn't have any of the spark of their other ten matches I think I've seen. I guess this WCW stay has actually helped Rey as much as it has hindered Juventud, because the last couple of PPV Rey matches are much better than this match. I guess its the fantastic infusion of psychology that is infused into Rey's current matches that is starting to put them in a different class than these highspot fests with Psicosis. Plus I'm starting to dig Psicosis as the Mexican mat wrestler that I've seen him as in the last few matches, which actually dates back to the key series of matches against El Hijo Del Santo I guess, as opposed to the Sabu-esque suicidal bumptaker. The more I see them progress as a total wrestlers, the less I'll be blown

away by these type of matches. There is a Jericho/UD match with UD in a ass-whomping black outfit (I thought it was the return of Ultimate Dragon at first). See synopsis above.:) There was a Motegi tag match <> where Motegi is beaten unmercifully by your basic genaric WAR heavyweight cretin.:) So it's not just Jr Hvywt Tournaments anymore! WOO-HOO! There is also a Tenryu vs Mr Pogo match that really rules if you watch as you fast forward past it like I did.:)

- After watching WCWSN, it's official: Biggest comeback, most improved wrestler and feud of the year ALL belong to Steven Regal. Since the Ass-Stomping feud with Fit Finlay (Come back to us Belfast Bruiser!) Regal has ruled it so hard, and pulling good matches out of okay workers like Hugh Morrus is becoming quite the common occurance. The days of laziness are over it seems. I await a Regal/Benoit feud.

NEXT WEEK: LUCHA! LUCHA LIBRE! AND MORE LUCHA LIBRE! That weird ass "Rumble" British TV show (Rob, you were right!:) and the rest of those Ollie GAEA tapes with Akira Hokuta on em! WOO-HOO!

NANIWA~!

Dean Rasmussen, HaleyHEAD!